

## For Immediate Release

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### STREETWISE ANNOUNCES ITS “20 MOST INSPIRING CHICAGOANS” HONOREES

**August 2, 2018** (Chicago) – StreetWise, a nonprofit that empowers people and provides resources for the homeless and at-risk populations throughout Chicago, announces this year’s honorees for a new award created to recognize and honor the “20 Most Inspiring Chicagoans” who are making the city a better place to live and work. The honorees, selected by a committee of Streetwise Board of Directors and affiliated partners, will be celebrated at the annual StreetWise Gala Celebration on September 27 at Galleria Marchetti.

“Honoring the often-unsung heroes among us who are making our amazing city even stronger is so important as I believe it will inspire others to think about ways they can make a positive impact in the community as well,” says Pete Kadens, StreetWise Board Chair. “We received hundreds of amazing nominations that show what we all knew --- Chicagoans have such generous hearts and minds. Our 20 honorees represent a wide variety of courageous people who selflessly work on behalf of others and represent the philanthropic spirit of the city.”

This year’s 20 Most Inspiring Chicagoans are:

**Andrew Albert, MD:** As a gastroenterologist and colon cancer awareness advocate, Dr. Albert takes innovative and attention-getting measures to ensure patients get their colonoscopy. From hosting awareness classes to cycling around the city with a “Get Your Colonoscopy Test ASAP!” sign attached to his back, this physician is taking (and pedaling) colon cancer awareness to the next level.

**Carolyn Boyd:** Founder of Humble Hearts, Boyd advocates for the homeless, families facing poverty and youths who struggle with mental health disorders. From assisting single mothers coming out of shelters with young children and no possessions to hosting events to ensure underprivileged teens have clothes to wear to prom to fundraising for students in need of school supplies, she is constantly and selflessly working to improve the lives of those facing enormous obstacles and hardships.

**Emile Cambry:** Cambry is a business professor, filmmaker and social entrepreneur who founded the nonprofit Blue1647, a next generation social innovation center, supporting all forms of entrepreneurship including events, filmmakers, artists, engineers, and designers. Students benefit via instruction and mentoring from tech entrepreneurs in Chicago, the Midwest and Silicon Valley. Blue1647 is a vibrant example of the ways in which creative professionals, entrepreneurs, change-makers and nonprofits can collaborate to make meaningful, lasting impact.

**Chance the Rapper:** Chicago native and three-time Grammy winner, Chance the Rapper founded the nonprofit SocialWorks, which aims to empower youth through the arts, education, and civic engagement while fostering leadership, accessibility, and positivity. Chance and SocialWorks have done a lot within its 2-year life-span -- leading 3,000 young people to vote, facilitating monthly OpenMikes for high school students and summer day camp programming within the Roseland community, raising tens of thousands of warming items for the

homeless, and securing more than \$4 million for enrichment programs at Chicago Public Schools through his #supportCPS campaign. Chance continues to be an inspiration to CPS students as a CPS graduate himself and through SocialWorks, will continue to use his platform to spark change and give back to youth around the world.

**Jahmal Cole:** As the brainchild behind My Block, My Hood, My City, Cole empowers teenagers to overcome the poverty and isolation they face, boosting educational attainment and opening them to opportunities that make a difference in their lives. My Block, My Hood, My City provides underprivileged youth with an awareness of the world and opportunities beyond their neighborhoods, taking students on explorations focused on STEM, arts and culture, citizenry and volunteerism, health, community development, culinary arts and entrepreneurship.

**Cardinal Blase Cupich:** As creator of the Instruments of Peace Fund -- which invests in novel anti-violence approaches and expands existing and promising programs to strengthen families, provides safe places for children to learn and play, educates people how to solve conflicts peacefully and improves access to mental health services – Cardinal Cupich is transforming neighborhoods and is a leading voice for commonsense gun control, immigration issues, racism and inequality.

**Sophie Draluck:** As a junior at Highland Park High School, she founded Cycle Forward Now with the goal of destigmatizing menstruation and identifying the need for sanitary products all over the world but also in Chicagoland for women who cannot afford them. Her charity collects donations, buys sanitary products in bulk and distributes them to women in need via organizations such as Support the Girls, Moraine Food Pantry and homeless shelters.

**Kim Foxx:** As the first African American in Chicago elected State’s Attorney for Cook County, Foxx overcame extraordinary poverty growing up in the Cabrini-Green housing project and went on to receive her undergraduate and law degree from Southern Illinois University. As State’s Attorney, she manages the second largest prosecutor’s office in the country, overseeing an office of nearly 800 attorneys and 1,500 employees.

**Alicia Gonzalez:** As current Executive Director of Cubs Charities and former Founding Executive Director of Chicago Run, Gonzalez has touched the lives of thousands of children and families. At Chicago Run, she brought physical activity to communities to help solve problems such as obesity and violence and to bolster self-esteem while inventing a pilot program to inspire the incorporation of movement into the school day for elementary students at underserved districts. That program was so successful it was expanded to additional schools and to preschool and high school students.

**Shawn Harrington:** A high school and college basketball superstar, Harrington grew up on the West Side of Chicago and was featured in the documentary film “Hoop Dreams” about Marshall High School’s legendary team. Upon returning to Chicago, he became an assistant coach and mentor to special education students. In 2014, in a case of mistaken identity, he was shot and paralyzed while driving with his daughter who was unharmed thanks to her dad. Today he is a restorative justice counselor at Marshall and non-violence activist who uses the Hoops for Peace basketball tournament and camps to promote his message of peace.

**Jonny Imerman:** While fighting cancer at 26 years old, Imerman had loving support from family and friends, but never met anyone his age who was a cancer survivor. He wanted to talk to someone just like him, someone who truly understood. With that goal, he founded Imerman Angels which introduces each cancer fighter to one survivor who is the same age, same gender, and someone who has already faced that particular type of cancer. A cancer survivor would be an angel – walking, talking, living proof to inspire the fighter that he/she can overcome cancer.

**Tom Kuczmariski:** Chicago Innovation, founded 16 years ago by Kuczmariski, has grown to a year-round series of events celebrating genius new products, services and organizations being created in the Chicago area. The organization has a STEM program reaching 3,000 kindergarten through eighth graders and a mentoring program for women that has grown exponentially. His seventh and most recent book, *Lifting People Up*, focuses on praise and recognition in the workplace.

**Jennifer Maddox:** A Chicago Police officer, Maddox launched Future Ties in 2011 while serving as a security officer at Parkway Gardens during her off hours. After noticing that young residents often caused trouble because they were bored, she convinced building management to open a basement so she could provide activities for the kids after school. The program has since expanded to operate year-round, and Maddox hopes that one day Future Ties will be able to reach all 1,200 kids that live in the complex to help them learn, grow and succeed.

**Bonnie Micheli and Tracy Roemer:** Roemer and Micheli's shared passion for teaching and fitness training led them to co-found and co-own Shred415. Unlike other fitness options, a Shred415 class involves four, 15-minute segments broken into 30-second intervals that have clients working between cardiovascular and strength training. Giving back to the community is large part of their shared philosophy such as fundraising efforts for Bright Pink, which focuses on the early detection of breast and ovarian cancer in young women.

**Porter Moser:** Coach Moser of Loyola University lifted everyone's Chicago cold weather blues in March when he led his team to make the Final Four of the NCAA basketball tournament. Players attribute the success in part to Moser's faith in the team with a "never give up" mentality. His close collaboration with 98-year-old team chaplain nun Sister Jean is also inspiring, including her in pre-game huddles, evaluating her recruiting reports and reviewing her post game email analyses.

**Tom Owens:** Rather than relaxing in his retirement, Owens chose to begin The Owens Foundation which focuses on homelessness prevention programs and providing scholarships for disadvantaged youth. He also founded The Cara Program (Cara is the Gaelic word for "friend") which has placed more than 6,000 participants into jobs with leading companies throughout Chicago. Cara provides quality training, employment and support to motivated adults affected by poverty and homelessness.

**Anthony Rizzo:** World Champion and 3 Time All-Star first baseman, Anthony Rizzo is not only a hero on the field but off of it as well. Over the last six years, Anthony has been a champion for pediatric cancer patients and their families. In 2008, at the age of 18, Anthony was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Anthony quickly realized that an individual does not fight cancer alone, but rather the whole family tackles it together. As a result, the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation (ARFF) was established in 2012 to provide financial support to families battling cancer and to advance pediatric cancer research.

**Ron Safer:** By dedicating his time to pro bono work, Safer has worked to exonerate those wrongfully convicted including Arthur Brown who was sentenced to life in prison for a double murder and arson he did not commit. He and his team have helped to exonerate seven other people since 2000 and volunteer their efforts to unraveling cases for innocent people who otherwise would spend their lives in prison with nobody willing to revisit their cases or help to prove their innocence.

**Sheldon Smith:** In 2009 Smith started The Dovetail Project, an organization designed to support young African American fathers in Chicago through a 12-week training program that includes parenting workshops, financial literacy training, and other parental support and education. The program educates fathers about the roles, rights and responsibilities of fatherhood as well as their importance in the lives of their children. It also includes a component addressing Felony Street Law to help young men avoid incarceration and stay present in their kids' lives. Last year 92 fathers graduated from the program, the most in its history.

**Glen Tullman:** A strong proponent of giving back, Tullman has served as Chancellor on the International Board of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) as well as advocating on behalf of many worthy causes. Currently CEO of fast-growing diabetes management company Livongo, his family foundation has contributed more than \$10 million to healthcare, educational and inner-city diversity programs. As a serial entrepreneur, Tullman has created thousands of jobs and served as a mentor and role model to many, both as a business person and civic leader.

“The 20 Most Inspiring Chicagoans Award celebrates those who champion and empower our neighbors each day, many of whom are disenfranchised and without hope,” says Julie Youngquist, Chief Executive Officer. “We found true catalysts for change during this process, much like StreetWise Magazine has been a catalyst for change for more than 25 years. We look forward to recognizing these individuals at our annual StreetWise Gala Celebration and appreciate the positive difference they are making in our city and surrounding communities.”

**About StreetWise:**

StreetWise has been part of the fabric of Chicago for over 25 years. StreetWise Magazine has covered everything Chicago from its people to its social issues, politics, nonprofits, arts, culture, and neighborhoods. We are champions for the marginalized and seek to preserve Chicago’s role as the City of Broad Shoulders that drew in thousands to build their own opportunity.

StreetWise is also about building opportunity by empowering people to work. Over the past 25 years more than 12,000 StreetWise Magazine vendors have found dignity on street corners in many neighborhoods across the city. StreetWise vendors are inspired by the kindness, compassion, and support of Chicagoans as they are empowered to earn an income with dignity-getting a hand up and not a hand out. These vendors see and feel inspiration in the streets each day.

To learn more about StreetWise visit our website at [www.streetwise.org](http://www.streetwise.org)